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Dr. Hans Bethe, *Time* and Those Russian Tests

The lecture delivered by Dr. Hans A. Bethe at Cornell Jan. 5 was the first reliable information on the conclusions Dr. Bethe has reached as head of the special committee of scientists which made a preliminary report to President Kennedy last month on the significance of the Russian test series. This report will help to determine whether the President finally orders resumption of atmospheric testing. The preliminary evaluation was made on Dec. 7 and there were alarming reports, notably in *Time* for Dec. 15, as to what it contained. *Time* called its report, "The Grimmest Meeting." It pictured the President and the National Security Council with "an assortment of top scientists" gathered around what *Time* described for the occasion as a "coffin-shaped" Cabinet table. On it was a top secret report about the Russian tests. "The evidence was overwhelming," *Time* said. The Russians had made "giant strides" and "unless the U.S. starts moving fast, it may be mastered by the physical force that it first unleashed as an instrument of devastation."

These reports, like similar ones in the *Washington Star* and the *New York Times* were largely due to the efforts of Dr. Edward Teller, in town early in December to urge resumption of atmospheric testing. Dr. Bethe, on the other hand, reported at Cornell that "nothing has been changed fundamentally by the Russian tests" and that "nothing fundamental is likely to change by any amount of future testing." Dr. Bethe declared "the value of tests has been greatly exaggerated. We already know so much about nuclear weapons," he went on, "that there is very little more to learn. We have weapons of all sizes for all reasonable military purposes."

Why Was the Big Bomb So Clean?

Dr. Bethe also dispelled the mystery about the unexpected cleanliness of the big bomb the Russians exploded on Oct. 30. *Time* reported "strong evidence" that the Russians have developed "an improved triggering device." John W. Finney in the *New York Times* (Dec. 8) went further. "In the opinion of some atomic weapons experts," he wrote, ". . . the Soviet development of a small fission trigger raises the long-range threat that the Soviet Union is making progress toward development of the neutron bomb," the favorite hobgoblin of the pro-testing forces. Dr. Bethe revealed* that the *relative* cleanliness of that explosion was not due to any breakthrough on a triggering device but because the Russians put a lead jacket around this 60-megaton monster, reducing fission to only a few megatons. "Thus," Dr. Bethe explained, "the Russians reduced the fallout, especially that which might have fallen on their own country. If lead were replaced by uranium, the Russian device would give 100 megatons or slightly more."

Neither Civil Defense Nor Anti-Missile

"I think it is clear that any really effective civil defense is impossible, and I believe the same is true for AICBM [anti intercontinental ballistic missile]. It is not very difficult to design a defensive missile which will come close enough to an ICBM to destroy it by means of an atomic explosion. There is also no problem about providing atomic warheads for anti-missiles. But the offense can send decoys along with their missiles which are almost impossible to distinguish from the missiles, and they can send many missiles simultaneously which saturate the radars of the defense. Thus I think AICBM is virtually hopeless, and the deterrent can remain stable for a long time."

—Dr. Hans A. Bethe, at Cornell, Jan. 5.

Dr. Bethe said there is little military difference between 100 megatons and 10. Ten is enough to destroy nearly any big city. We have had 10-MT weapons since 1954, they since 1958. "We have 500 B-52s to deliver these, 1000 B-47s," Dr. Bethe said, "the Russians have smaller numbers but still enough to destroy us many times over." Our over-kill capacity is stupefying. Dr. Bethe said that assuming each B-47 carries 10 megatons and each B-52 carries 20 megatons, we have a striking power of 20,000 megatons in planes alone without counting the 100 missiles of Polaris submarines already in operation. In addition he estimated that in a few years we are likely to have about 1,000 long-range missiles. He did not say so but it must be hard indeed to divide the estimated 50 prime targets in the Soviet Union among 1500 attacking planes and 150 or so—soon 1,000—missiles.

How much is enough? The excuse for so huge a thermonuclear armada is the fear of surprise attack. But Dr. Bethe believes this danger has been reduced because Polaris submarines and Minutemen missiles in hardened bases make it impossible for an attacker to escape the certainty of retaliation. He sees a similar development on the Russian side. He says their test series included many tests in the range from 1 to 5 megatons, the range for development of solid fuel missiles similar to our Minutemen which could be placed in hardened bases. Dr. Bethe thinks "this major part of their test series therefore may well have reduced rather than increased the danger of war." For they will make the Russian retaliatory force as immune to surprise attack as ours.

This is the so-called stabilized nuclear deterrent. Dr. Bethe sees it as a new point from which fruitful arms negotiations can begin. He sees invulnerable bases making secrecy less

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***Thus confirming the accuracy of the report carried by Newsweek (Dec. 18) which was the opposite of Time's.**

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Castro and Nagy: One Dared Abandon, the Other Dared Adopt, Marxism-Leninism

Just What Do We Mean When We Ask Cuba to Cut Its Ties With Moscow?

At the new Puenta del Este conference which opens next Monday Cuba will be asked to cut its ties with the Soviet bloc under threat of hemispheric sanctions. What does the cutting of ties mean? Presumably it does not mean ending diplomatic relations. We have diplomatic ties with Moscow. So do many Latin American countries. Presumably it does not mean ending ordinary commercial ties with Moscow. We have them, as do other Latin countries. Presumably what we want to end are those ties which make Cuba wholly dependent on the Soviet bloc. These principally are the oil and sugar agreements. Without them Cuba's economic life would come to a standstill.

Will We Buy the Sugar If Moscow Doesn't?

Reasonably considered the ending of these ties requires more than action by Cuba. It also depends on action by us. If Cuba stops selling sugar to the Soviet bloc, will we buy it? The Mikoyan-Guevara trade agreement of a year ago is no obstacle to such a shift; it says the Soviets will buy the sugar only if the U.S. doesn't. On what terms would we buy again? Compensation for U.S. properties? Cuba has several times offered to pay compensation as part of an agreement to resume sugar purchases. Or would we insist on turning back the clock and reinstating United Fruit as we did in Guatemala?

On oil: If Cuba agrees to stop buying Soviet oil, would we lift the oil embargo? Or would we insist on the return of the refineries and a promise never to buy cheaper Soviet oil as the price of reconciliation?

It is quite obvious—and we hope some sensible Latin American will have the nerve to stand up and say so at Puenta del Este—that it takes two to cut these ties and to make peace between Havana and Washington, that negotiation and not dictation is called for, that a resolution simply asking Cuba to cut off Soviet ties, is really asking Castro for unconditional surrender.

Essentially the Latin Americans are being summoned to help us do to Cuba what the Russians did to Hungary. Nagy was destroyed because he left the Soviet bloc and abandoned Marxism-Leninism. Castro is to be destroyed because he left the U.S. bloc and *adopted Marxism-Leninism*. No matter how you look at it, this is Big Brotherism in action.

Cuba and Co-Existence

The new White Paper on Cuba by the State Department has a more rightist flavor than the one issued last April on the eve of the Cuban invasion. One passage struck us particularly. It complains that a year ago, in a joint communique with Mikoyan "Major Guevara accepted, on behalf of the Castro regime, the obligation to support 'resolutely peaceful co-existence between states with different social systems', the Soviet euphemism for a policy of infiltration and subversion of non-Communist States." (Our emphasis). We know, of course, that the paranoids in Congress regard co-existence as a Communist plot, but we were unaware that it was national policy. If it is then much which the Administration is doing—cultural exchange, joint diplomatic pressure for a coalition regime in Laos, and effort to reach a modus vivendi in Berlin and Central Europe—are equally suspect. Or is it just that as usual in Latin American relations, the direction of policy always seem to slip back into the same stale hands?

West Germany Offers to Buy British Arms Secrets

A Sensible Plan on Berlin Access — Both East and West Germans Say No

Little attention was paid it by the U.S. press but the British Labor Party Leader Gaitskell in West Berlin Jan. 5 suggested that an international agency with both the West and the East Germans on it be established to supervise road, rail and water access to West Berlin. The West Germans at once objected that this would give the East Germans de facto recognition. The official East German paper, *Neues Deutschland*, also objected. It said this would restrict the "sovereign rights" East Germany already exercises over road, rail and water access. The West Germans and the East Germans are alike in that neither wants to concede anything. So long as this is their idea of negotiation, the world will be kept on the brink.

Both the U.S. and Britain have balance-of-payments difficulties partly because of the expense of keeping troops in Germany. Both have asked German contributions to this cost. The Germans refuse to pay "occupation costs" but offer to alleviate balance-of-payments difficulties by buying more arms from the two countries. This puts both in the position of begging the Germans to buy more armament. Bonn recently announced plans to buy $600,000,000 worth of arms from the U.S. in the next two years. Britain wants some similar deal to help pay the $200,000,000 a year it costs to keep a British Army on the Rhine. The Germans are offering to pay for joint research projects in weapons, aircraft and rocketry "for which the British," the *Baltimore Sun* reported from Bonn Jan. 8, "would contribute more advanced knowledge." We wonder if some of this would be thermonuclear?

Judgment at Nuremberg

We don't usually review movies but Stanley Kramer's "Judgment at Nuremberg" is a political event, a film of courage and artistry. This pictures a war crimes trial of German judges in 1947-48 when the onset of the cold war was leading U.S. policy to soft-pedal anti-Nazism in the name of anti-Communism. It is a miracle that a Hollywood team would dare so sensitive an issue. The conflict which faces the American judge and prosecutor is not so unlike the conflict of means and ends which faced the German judges on trial before them. The result is drama of the deepest intensity, terribly relevant not only at a time when we are being pressured to give nuclear arms to the Germans but when the new magnitude of weaponry raises questions of conscience for every human being. Spencer Tracy as the U.S. Judge, Maximilian Schell as the German defense counsel, Marlene Dietrich as the widow of a General the U.S. hanged and Bert Lancaster as the German Judge who declares himself guilty are memorable. Highest praise of all goes to Abby Mann who wrote the play.

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While the Editors of McGraw-Hill Encourage Post-Attack Business-As-Usual Delusions

Nucleonics Magazine Warns No Nation Can Survive All-Out Nuclear War

McGraw-Hill's various trade journals this month contain a special 16-page insert, to be made available separately as a booklet, called "Nuclear Attack and Industrial Survival." It includes a letter from Secretary of Defense McNamara calling on U.S. industrial executives to prepare "for the possibility—however unlikely—of nuclear war." It is on a higher level of competence than the Defense Department's fallout shelter pamphlet, and it carries a preface saying, "Nothing in this report . . . encourages aggression or bravado. On the contrary, the awe-full dimensions of destruction . . . despite all the preparations for protection . . . compel the utmost effort for prevention of nuclear war."

Yet, for all its sobriety, the McGraw-Hill booklet leaves the impression that if only steps are taken in time to protect plant and labor force, then somehow the intricate network of transport and communications, advertising and selling, on which industry depends for power, supplies and customers can be restored and profitable production of TV sets and washing machines resumed.

The Best Informed Dissent

We hope thoughtful business men will notice that the editors of the one McGraw-Hill publication which is closest to the subject do not agree. *Nucleonics*, the McGraw-Hill trade journal devoted exclusively to nuclear problems, prefaced the 16-page insert with an editorial of its own which cuts the ground from under these tacit assumptions.

The editors of *Nucleonics* draw a distinction between individual and national survival. They recognize that individuals may survive. They believe society "out of humane considerations" should "set aside a reasonable amount of capital" to help those who do survive "just as an ocean-going ship provides lifeboats" for use in the event of a catastrophe. But as to the elaborate social structure on which business depends, the editors of *Nucleonics* are pessimistic. They "feel it is unrealistic to believe the United States—or any modern nation—can survive an all-out nuclear attack."

They believe "the survival of a complex society organized on a national scale" is "practically synonymous with the existence of our huge nationwide systems of distribution and communication—our railroads and highways, our telephone and radio-television networks and our power distribution grids." They say it "would be prohibitively expensive, if not physically impossible, to provide effective 'shelters' for these vast, complicated networks." They believe the survivors would be too busy "foraging . . . for the essentials of life" to reconstruct them.

"A postwar society," they conclude with quiet horror, "would most likely consist of scattered self-sufficient communities of people who once called themselves Americans but who would be much too occupied with the struggle for physical existence to know or care what is happening beyond their own immediate localities. . . . We might compare them rather to the survivors of a shipwreck cast up on a strange shore."

Is it not delusion to believe that once the fallout is washed off the factory roof and the rubble cleared out of the yard, one could sell Buicks and TV sets to this handful of radioactive Robinson Crusoes? And how will industry find a market for its other mainstay, weapons of war, if the Russian menace is ended? If we're planning to restore the profit system, we'd better put our Communist enemies in deep shelters, too. How revive U.S. business without them?

One Way to Alleviate Shortages

"There might be a surplus of food and plenty of livable housing left after a massive nuclear attack—because so many who had lived would be dead. This is one suggestion made in the latest of a number of studies by the military on possible or probable impact of attack on the United States and the behavior of citizens. The study was conducted for the Behavioral Sciences Division of the Air Force's Office of Scientific Research, Inc. . . . It carries the title, 'Social Phenomena in A Post-Attack Nuclear Situation.' . . . An attack would reduce the population without destroying the same proportion of consumer goods. In food 'a surplus may be created, due primarily to the sharp reduction in population.'"

—AP story in Washington Post, Jan. 7.

The Medieval Family Regime for Which We Risk A New Korea in Vietnam

Washington, Jan. 8—"I wonder whether it is a crime to be a dictator?" This question was asked at a press conference today by Archbishop Ngo Nenh Thuc, of Vietnam. The Archbishop made it clear that he thinks the answer is 'No.' He is a member of a family which controls virtually every phase of life in embattled South Vietnam.

As Archbishop of all Vietnam (North and South) and the oldest member of the clan, 64, he is the head of the family. A brother is the Bishop in charge of the Catholic Church in South Vietnam. Another brother, Ngo Dinh Diem, is the President of South Vietnam. A third brother, M. Nhu, controls all the labor groups in free South Vietnam. . . . A sister-in-law—Mme. Nhu, wife of the labor leader—has to quote the Archbishop, "her fingers in all the commercial and industrial organizations of the country." . . .

—Howard Norton, Baltimore Sun, Jan. 9.

"South Vietnam must buy time in which to recast its military force with new booster shots of U.S. aid and to recast its generally unpopular authoritarian government as well.

Many of the 1600 U.S. military men here fear that this shot in the arm has come too late. . . . In such a case, Vietnam's only salvation will be the quick dispatch of American combat troops, bolstered perhaps by at least token units from other Southeast Asia Treaty Organization powers. From these one can picture another Korea, or the start of World War III. . . .

"Diem failed abysmally to generate popular enthusiasm for what looked like a rosy future in Vietnam. For this he has himself to blame. . . .

"In the countryside many of Diem's officials came to view their government jobs as open licenses for larceny. They often extorted money from the peasants. . . . Thus the Viet Cong guerrillas could gain popular approval by occasionally murdering a corrupt official. Soon they had thousands of peasants eager to supply them with rice and information. . . . A single dramatic gesture, such as the recognition of a loyal opposition with the rights of free speech and a free press, would enhance his damaged popularity. . . . When I talked with Diem he refused even to consider the . . . step."

—Saturday Evening Post, Jan. 6.

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The Testing Decision Before the President Is Political, Not Scientific

(*Continued from Page One*)

important to the Russians. He advocates a step-up in conventional arms as a stage in reduced reliance on massive retaliation, and "an essential part of disarmament in the nuclear area." He believes the gap between the East and West on inspection can be bridged by some such proposal as that of Prof. Louis B. Sohn's (see box on page 4). Dr. Bethe sees complete and general disarmament under a system of world law as the ultimate goal.

How Sell New Missiles Without New Models?

Dr. Bethe believes a few hundred missiles on each side would be enough for a stabilized deterrent while long range negotiations proceed. "There is at least a chance now to slow down the arms race," Dr. Bethe said, "but of course if one side resumes the other side will follow." This is what makes the decision on whether to resume atmospheric testing so important. The pressures are enormous. Mutual distrust has grown. Dr. Bethe says the size and extent of the Russian tests shows bad faith, that while negotiating their laboratories were working for months "on the assumption that tests would at some time be resumed." On the other hand Dr. Bethe said one of his two main intentions in advocating the test ban was "to stabilize the technical advantage which the U.S. still possessed in 1958 in nuclear weapons," the other to establish a precedent in inspection. "Neither of these aims," he said, "can any longer be realized." In the meantime a huge industrial-military complex has grown up in the missile industry which would be menaced by a cutback in production, a stabilized deterrent, the ending of tests. New sales depend on new models and new models depend on new tests.

The pressures seem to be reflected by Dr. Bethe himself. While saying that nothing fundamentally has been changed by the Russian tests nor will be changed by further testing, he thinks it "reasonable" after the Russian tests that "we should also test those designs which we have developed in the laboratory" for Polaris and Minuteman. "There are a few other tests," he said, "which make sense for us, but I do not believe that nuclear testing is the endless frontier that some people seem to think it is." He did not specify whether these tests could be underground. But at another point, after declaring that he did not think a really effective anti-ICBM possible [see box on page 1], he did say the need to keep up with developments in this field "may require tests in the atmosphere." The question Dr. Bethe did not answer, at least in the prepared text from which this is written [it will be published later in *Scientific American*] is whether improvements Dr. Bethe admits will not change the picture fundamentally are worth the risk of triggering off an intensified arms race. This, the real question, is a political one. The value of Dr. Bethe's report is that it shows the real nature of the decision facing the President. It is not a question of a major technological break-through. It is a question of finding some way politically to break out of a deadly race straight down a dead-end street. Wouldn't the President be strengthened in his lonely task if he took the issue to the country? If free society has meaning then this decision ought not to be made without fuller awareness of what is at stake, and a chance to let the people speak.

The Sohn Sampling Scheme for Inspection

"The best way out of this impasse [over inspection] has been suggested by Prof. Sohn of the Harvard Law School. According to this plan, each of the two major countries, Russia and the U.S., divides its territory into a number of zones—let us say, 20—of approximately equal importance, and gives a map of the zones to the other country. Then each country declares the number of strategic weapons in each zone but not their exact location. Then the other country picks one of the zones, and has the right to inspect this one zone in all detail. In this way the initial declaration can be verified, and at the same time 95% of each country is still secret. After some time, let us say half a year, a new declaration must be made, and another zone will be opened. The total number of weapons in all zones would be reduced according to an agreed schedule. After a while, other countries would participate in this scheme, and other armaments than strategic delivery vehicles would be included. An important question is whether a plan of this kind would be acceptable to the USSR. Private conversations with a few Russian scientists and social scientists seem encouraging, although such conversations may not mean very much in the light of power politics. Drastic reduction of strategic forces by treaty, and with inspection of the Sohn type, seem to me our best hope of stopping the arms race."

—Dr. Hans A. Bethe at Cornell, Jan. 5.

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